

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LIMA 05244 222220Z
ACTION ARA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY LIMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5403
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C O N F I D E N T I A L LIMA 5244

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PINS, PE SHUM
SUBJECT: DISTRUBANCES IN AREQUIPA

REF: LIMA 5146

1. STUDENT DISTURBANCES ALLEGEDLY IN PROTEST AGAINST GOP ECONOMIC MEASURES BROKE OUT JUNE 21 AT A SECONDARY SCHOOL IN AREQUIPA AND QUICKLY SPREAD TO SAN AGUSTIN UNIVERSITY. POLICE MOVED IN TO PUT DOWN THE DISORDER ARRESTING SCORES OF STUDENTS IN THE PROCESS. ONE OBSERVER

STATED THAT MANY STUDENTS WERE HELD IN A LOCAL SOCCER STADIUM PENDING DETERMINATION OF THEIR CASES. THE CITY CENTER REMAINED CALM BUT THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION SUSPENDED CLASSES INDEFINITELY IN AREQUIPA AS A PRECAUTIONARY MEASURE AGAINST FURTHER STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS WHICH

INVARIABLY RESULT IN STREET CLASHES WITH THE POLICE.

2. THE AREQUIPA DEPARTMENTAL LABOR FEDERATION, AFFILIATED TO THE MOSCOW-LINE CGTP, ANNOUNCED A 48-HOUR STRIKE BEGINNING 6:00 A.M. JUNE 22. THE GOP, IN TURN, SEVERELY WARNED UNIONS THAT STRIKES WERE ILLEGAL UNDER THE STATE OF EMERGENCY, AND LEADERS WOULD FACE CONSEQUENCES OF THEIR ILLEGAL ACTS. OBSERVERS IN AREQUIPA TELL
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 LIMA 05244 222220Z

THE EMBASSY THAT THE JUNE 22 STRIKE CALL IS BEING PARTIALLY HONORED BANKS ARE CLOSED (AND SOME CGTP AFFILIATED BANK UNION LEADERS HAVE BEEN ARRESTED), FEWER BUSES AND TAXIS ARE RUNNING, AND MANY BUSINESSES

ARE NOT OPERATING. HOWEVER, MOST MERCHANTS ARE OPEN FOR BUSINESS, AT THE SAME TIME PREPARED TO CLOSE AT THE FIRST INDICATION OF DISTURBANCES. WITH SCHOOLS SHUT DOWN THE CITY IS QUIET, AND TO

ALL APPEARANCES THE MORNING OF JUNE 22, PEACEFUL. YET EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS THE GOP MAY TAKE PRECAUTIONS AND PLACE AREQUIPA UNDER CURFEW.

3. LIMA REMAINS CALM ALTHOUGH SEVERAL BOMB EXPLOSIONS WERE HEARD (NO REPORTS OF DAMAGE OR INJURY) THE EVENING OF JUNE 21. CUZCO REMAINS UNDER CURFEW AND IS QUIET, ALTHOUGH STUDENT DISTURBANCES APPARENTLY OCCURRED AT A NEARBY TOWN CUASING IT TO BE PLACED UNDER CURFEW. MANY OF THE WELL OVER 100 STUDENTS AND LABOR AGITATORS ARRESTED LAST WEEK REMAIN UNDER DETENTION. RUMORS OF STUDENT DEATHS REMAIN UNCONFIRMED.

4. THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR ISSUED A COMMUNIQUE JUNE 21 TAKING ISSUE WITH CGTP VERSION OF EVENTS IN CUZCO (REFTEL) AS A "DISTORTION AND MAGNIFICATION OF EVENTS." THE GOP BLAMED LDEADERS OF THE CUZCO FEDERATION OF WORKERS (A CGTP AFFILIATE) FOR "INDUCING GROUPS OF STUDENTS AND WORKERS TO SUBVERT ORDER." THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR CALLED IN CGTP LEADERS TO DISCUSS THEIR TENDENTIOUS AND "DISTORTED" VERSION OF THE CUZCO EVENTS AND TO WARN THEM THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL NOT BE COERCED INTO MODIFYING ITS POLICIES.

5. GOP SOURCES TELL THE EMBASSY THAT THEY EXPECT SPORADIC DISTURBANCES AND LABOR TROUBLES OVER THE NEXT SEVERAL WEEKS BUT THEY HOPE TO ISOLATE AND CONTAIN THEM CITY BY CITY. WITH PRUDENT BUT FORCEFUL APPLICATION OF EMERGENCY DECREES THE GOP HOPES TO PREVENT THUS FAR LOCALIZED ANTI-GOVERNMENT DISTURBANCES
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 LIMA 05244 222220Z

FROM COALESCING INTO A NATIONWIDE PHENOMENON. THE WELL ORGANIZED APRA PARTY SEEMS TO BE SUPPORTING THE GOP IN THAT TASK, AND EVEN THE MOSCOW-LINE CGTP LABOR CONFEDERATION HAS APPARENTLY MADE NO EFFORT TO COORDINATE PROTESTS OR STRIKE CALLS OF ITS DEPARTMENT-LEVEL FEDERATIONS OR ITSELF INITIATE LIM-LEVEL OR NATIONAL LABOR DISTURBANCES.

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